

Message Text

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51

ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 NEA-14 ISO-00 SCCT-02 SCS-03 SCA-01

IO-14 AID-20 IGA-02 PM-07 NSC-07 SP-03 SS-20 RSC-01

L-03 H-03 PRS-01 CIAE-00 INR-11 NSAE-00 DODE-00 DRC-01

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P R 151458Z AUG 74

FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0591

INFO AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMCONSUL ASMARA

C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 9721

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, CASC, ET

SUBJECT: TENNECO FOUR

REF: ADDIS 9588

1. CANADIAN CHARGE' GAUTHIER AND UNDP REPRESENTATIVE DAVIS ACCOMPANIED ME IN CALL ON FONMIN AT NOON AUGUST 15 TO DISCUSS TENNECO PROBLEM. FONMIN HAD NOT BEEN IN HIS OFFICE PREVIOUS DAY AND A HALF AND THUS OPENED IN OUR PRESENCE THE LETTER CONTAINING LIST OF FIFTY PRISONERS WHOSE RELEASE DEMANDED BY ELF. I MADE PRESENTATION ALONG LINES PARA 2 REFTEL, SAYING HOWEVER AT REQUEST OF TENNECO'S BOGAN, ON BASIS OF PHONE CALL TO HOUSTON, THAT TENNECO'S BOARD OF DIRECTORS WAS GIVING SERIOUS CONSIDERATION TO "CESSATION OF OPERATIONS IN ETHIOPIA" (RATHER THAN "PULLING OUT OF ETHIOPIA"). I SUGGESTED THAT IEG MIGHT FIND IT SOMEWHAT EASIER TO RELEASE THOSE PRISONERS WHO HAVE ALREADY SPENT MANY YEARS IN PRISON FOR THEIR OFFENSES. THE CANADIAN CHARGE' ADDED THAT IT WAS DIFFICULT FOR CANADIAN GOVERNMENT PROCEED WITH ITS DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE FOR ETHIOPIA PENDING RESOLUTION OF TENNECO
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PROBLEM.

2. FONMIN INQUIRED WHETHER THE TWO LISTS OF ELF PRISONERS CONSTITUTED THE FINAL DEMAND OF ELF, TO WHICH I REPLIED THAT IT DID SO FAR AS IEG IS CONCERNED. ZEWDE SUGGESTED THAT I CALL ON MINISTER OF INTERIOR, WHO WOULD BE DEEPLY INVOLVED IN THE MATTER, AND I AGREED TO DO SO. ZEWDE SAID HE WOULD TAKE MATTER UP WITH MIN INTERIOR THAT SAME AFTERNOON AND SAID HE WOULD DO ALL HE COULD CONVINCE THE MILITARY TO MAKE SIGNIFICANT CONCESSIONS. HE SAID FRANKLY THAT MILITARY'S DECISION WOULD BE DECISIVE AND HE SPOKE OF AFCC AS THOUGH IT WERE A SEPARATE GOVERNMENT. HE SAID HE WOULD SEEK HELP OF GENERAL AMAN BUT ADMITTED THAT AFCC FREQUENTLY DOESN'T LISTEN TO HIM EITHER. I ASKED WHETHER IT MIGHT HELP FOR ME TO SEE GENERAL AMAN AND HE REPLIED AFFIRMATIVELY.

3. AFTER CANADIAN AND UNDP REPRESENTATIVES HAD LEFT, ZEWDE SAID THAT AFCC HAD NOT THUS FAR BEEN MUCH IMPRESSED BY HIS ARGUMENTS AND THOSE OF GENERAL AMAN REGARDING NECESSITY RELEASE ERITREAN PRISONERS. HE FELT THAT MANY OF AFCC MEMBERS DO NOT APPRECIATE IMPORTANCE OF US ASSISTANCE TO ETHIOPIA AND POSSIBLE REPERCUSSIONS OF TENNECO CASE ON THAT ASSISTANCE. HE ALSO MENTIONED THAT ONE GROUP OF AFCC REPRESENTATIVES WITH WHOM HE HAD SPOKEN HAD BEEN QUITE UPSET BY AN INTERVIEW WITH UTHMAN SALIH, AN ELF SPOKESMAN, WHICH HAD BEEN PUBLISHED IN JUNE 21 ISSUE OF AL HAWADIS, AN ARABIC PERIODICAL PUBLISHED IN BEIRUT. A MAJOR ALLEGATION MADE IN ARTICLE IS THAT U.S. IS APPLYING INTENSE PRESSURE ON IEG TO ARRIVE AT A SETTLEMENT OF ERITREAN PROBLEM.

4. OTHER TOPICS COVERED IN MY SUBSEQUENT CONVERSATION WITH ZEWDE WERE THE INTERNAL POLITICAL SITUATION, MILITARY ASSISTANCE FOR ETHIOPIA, AND HIS ATTENDANCE AT OPENING OF UNGA. SEPTELS FOLLOW.

5. COMMENT. I WILL SEE MIN INTERIOR AND MIN DEFENSE ASAP. INVESTIGATION OF CHARGES AGAINST THE FIFTY PRISONERS WILL PROBABLY BEGIN ONLY AUGUST 16 AND I DOUBT WHETHER COMPLETE INFORMATION COULD BE AVAILABLE BEFORE AUGUST 21. AS INDICATED IN ADDIS 9484, THE SUBSEQUENT DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES WILL INEVITABLY TAKE SOME TIME. BOGAN FULLY UNDERSTANDS PROBLEM AND WILL EXPLAIN IT TO ZEIN AUGUST 17 IN KHARTOUM.
WYMAN

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